

null  
Debra P Tous 09/27/2006 10:18:17 AM From DB/Inbox: Debra P Tous

Cable  
Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 05895

SIPDIS  
CXBKKSVR:  
ACTION: POL  
INFO: TSA AMB CHRON CONS DAO DATTLO JTF JUSMAG NAS PA  
RMA SA DCM ECON RSO

DISSEMINATION: POL1  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM:ARVIZUAA  
DRAFTED: POL:GREENBERGDR  
CLEARED: POL:SUTTONSM, ECON:JCAROUSO

VZCZCBKI995  
OO RUEHC RUEHVS RUEHBY RUEHUL RUEHWL RHEHNSC  
RHEFDIA RHHMUNA RHHMUNA RHFJSCC RUCPDOC RUEATRS RUEAIIA  
DE RUEHBK #5895/01 2681110  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 251110Z SEP 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1881  
INFO RUEHVS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 6082  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2131  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1524  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHFJSCC/COMMARFORPAC  
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BANGKOK 005895

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

TREASURY PASS TO FRB SAN FRANCISCO/TERESA CURRAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [TH](#)  
SUBJECT: THAILAND UPDATE: SEPTEMBER 25

REF: A. BANGKOK 5874 (CONTINUED CALM)  
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 5834 (RETURNING TO NORMAL)  
[1](#)C. BANGKOK 5747 (HAT YAI BOMBING)  
[1](#)D. BANGKOK 5463 (BORWORNSAK ASSESSES THAKSIN)

Classified By: DCM Alexander A. Arvizu, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Council for Democratic Reform Under the Constitutional Monarchy (CDRM) banned both wiretapping and political activities against the interests of the CDRM. Television broadcasts have featured the coup leaders receiving the Royal Command that gave the King's imprimatur to their seizure of power. The CDRM has appointed members of the National Counter Corruption Commission and a special panel to investigate corruption during the Thaksin administration. A September 23 roadside bomb in Pattani province marked the first significant act of political violence since the coup. An MFA official dismissed rumors of a Burmese high-level visit to Thailand. The CDRM's search for a civilian Prime Minister continues. End Summary.

CDRM UPDATE - MORE GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS  
-----

12. (C) The CDRM issued Public Announcement 21, banning illegal eavesdropping/wiretapping of telephones or other communications. This announcement appears to be in response to the widespread fears (which we believe were justified) that Thaksin and his supporters were using their control of the largest cellphone operator to eavesdrop on their political opponents (ref D). In Public Announcement 22, the CDRM advised all administrative and political organizations on the local level which "disagree with the CDRM" to "stop their political movements or activities until the situation in the country is back to normal." Nevertheless, press reports indicated students and university lecturers in Bangkok would hold an anti-coup political discussion at Bangkok's Thammasat University late on the afternoon of September 25.

#### RECEIPT OF ROYAL COMMAND TELEVISED

-----

13. (C) All television stations simultaneously broadcast a September 22 ceremony at which CDRM leader General Sonthi and other CDRM figures received the Royal Command empowering the CDRM to run the government (ref B). The King does not appear in person for such ceremonies, however. Thai television has yet to broadcast video footage of the King subsequent to his August 4 release from a local hospital. Meanwhile, a Chinese journalist from Guangming Daily informed us that the Thai MFA protested a Xinhua News Agency story that linked the coup with the monarchy, and Xinhua was in the process of formally apologizing for the report.

#### CORRUPTION INVESTIGATIONS TO MOVE FORWARD

-----

14. (C) The CDRM on September 22 appointed the members of the National Counter Corruption Commission (NCCC), to be headed by Panthep Glanarongran, who formerly headed a royal development foundation. (Note: The NCCC, one of the independent agencies featured in the now-abolished 1997 Constitution, had not been operative since May 2005, when its members resigned en masse after a legal determination of wrongful action in connection with an attempt to raise their own pay. End Note.) Embassy contacts in the NGO community have generally characterized the new NCCC as credible, although noting Panthep may not be the strongest figure to chair it. One member of the new NCCC suggested publicly that the NCCC would prioritize investigation of the purchase from General Electric of CTX explosives detection equipment for the new Bangkok airport. Besides appointing the NCCC members, the CDRM also established a new eight-member panel to focus solely on corruption in projects approved by the Thaksin administration.

#### EDITORS KEEP AN EYE ON FTAS

-----

15. (C) Since the coup, various editorial comments in the press have warned disapprovingly that the CDRM might conclude free trade agreements with foreign governments. (Note: An FTA with Japan has been awaiting the Prime Minister's signature since early 2006. End Note.) We believe the media is primarily voicing concern in order to pre-empt any impulse by the CDRM to use FTAs to gain foreign favor; we have no reason to believe the media has detected concrete indicators of CDRM interest in concluding FTAs. Numerous Embassy contacts in the finance sector tell us the CDRM is highly unlikely to take controversial steps or undertake major initiatives in the economic realm.

#### SEVEN DAY CLOCK ON DETENTIONS

-----

16. (C) In a September 25 meeting organized by the EU delegation in Thailand to discuss human rights issues, including those related to the recent coup, Somchai Homlaor of the Lawyers Council of Thailand outlined some of the CDRM's restrictions of civil liberties. In discussing the

cases of four prominent pro-Thaksin TRT politicians (ref A), Somchai noted there are currently no declared charges against them. Thai law stipulates that detainees would need to be released within seven days unless criminal charges are filed.

(Note: Prommin Lertsuridej and Chidchai Vanasatidya have been detained since September 19; Yongyuth Tiypairat and Newin Chidchob since September 23. End note.)

#### BOMBING IN THE SOUTH

-----

¶7. (C) Midday on September 23, a roadside bomb injured four policemen in the Muslim-majority province of Pattani. This marked the first significant act of political violence in southern Thailand since the September 19 coup. According to press reports, the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) -- one of a half-dozen secessionist groups in southern Thailand -- has publicly supported the coup, and Yala Islamic Committee Deputy Chairman Nimu Makaje also publicly stated that the coup could mark the beginning of reconciliation between southern Thailand's Muslim population and the country's Buddhist majority. Meanwhile, the authorities have arrested two suspects in the September 16 Hat Yai bombings (ref C).

#### BURMA VISIT UNLIKELY

-----

¶8. (C) Kallayana Vipattipumiprates, Acting Director of the MFA division responsible for Burmese affairs, told us on September 25 that, contrary to rumor, Burmese Army Commander-in-Chief Maung Aye would not/not visit Thailand in the near future.

#### RUMOR CONTROL

-----

¶9. (C) In the past few days, there has been widespread speculation in the press and on the internet that the generals' coup was in fact a move to pre-empt a coup that Thaksin was planning for the following day. These appear to be nothing more than an effort at a post-facto justification of the coup by journalists, who are supporting the coup because they hated Thaksin, but have a guilty conscience about it. We note that the generals themselves have not given this excuse, even in private, and it is clear that the preparations for the coup started several days at least before the event. Overall, we put this story in the category of wishful thinking.

#### WHO WANTS TO BE A PRIME MINISTER?

-----

¶10. (C) Lots of names are circulating as possible interim Prime Minister, but no one candidate seems to have a clear lead. Economic contacts say that Band of Thailand Governor Pridyathorn does not want the job.

#### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

-----

¶11. (U) Former Agriculture Minister and Thai Rak Thai senior official Sudarat Keyuraphan has returned to Bangkok from Brussels with her family. She says she will take a break from politics.

#### KINDER, GENTLER COUP - PHOTO OP OF THE DAY

-----

¶12. (U) Everyday, the front page of the various newspapers show pictures of smiling soldiers receiving flowers from the public and playing with children. Today's best public relations photo showed a smiling bride and groom in Chiang Mai, getting their wedding pictures taken in front of a tank.  
BOYCE